

**A SURVEY AND SYNTHESIS OF  
THE LITERATURE AVAILABLE ON ANXIETY  
AND STRATEGIES WITH COPING WITH ANXIETY IN RELATION  
TO THE MUSICAL PERFORMER**

**BY**

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Finally to all others who have offered help and encouragement I would like to extend my deepest gratitude.

## DECLARATION

I certify that this study contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any institute, college or university, and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation.

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## ABSTRACT

The desire to undertake this specific research project stems from my interest, as a musician, a wind player, of the effect of nerves and anxiety in musical performance and more importantly, in the current coping strategies that are suggested and detailed in the available literature.

The aim of the project is to develop a sound knowledge of this topic, of dealing with musical performance anxiety by reading, understanding and then providing a detailed survey and synthesis of what I consider to be the most current and relevant material available.

This study will provide simple and concise overviews of a number of current theories and the best strategies to be adopted to cope with anxiety when faced with a musical performance.

Nearly all musicians will have to perform at some stage, and most of them will experience some degree of anxiety along with performance. Therefore, it is imperative that those of them that do experience any of the;

- physiological;
- cognitive;
- behavioural; and
- psychological

symptoms of anxiety are aware of and able to adopt the relevant coping strategies to eliminate or at least reduce performance anxiousness.

I hope, by this project to gain a knowledge in this area, and having gained this knowledge I hope to be able to evaluate the different studies and approaches and then, in my own performances adopt those that I feel are the most appropriate.

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 General Introduction and Definition of

#### "Musical Performance Anxiety"

What follows is a quote from a recent article in "The Australian Music Teacher Volume 4 No. 4 1995":

*"You remember that feeling? Your throat dries up, your hands feel clammy and distinctly uncontrollable. Your mind is turning to cotton wool - you fear that you won't be able to start or that you will blank out and seize up in the middle. You dread falling flat on your face in utter humiliation. There's an acute sick feeling in the pit of your stomach, and yet again you find yourself heading for the loo..... just in case."*<sup>1</sup>

I have always been interested in the strategies available for coping with anxiety whilst performing musically. When the opportunity arose to choose a topic I was inspired by both my own experiences with anxiety when performing and by witnessing the dramatic effects that "music performance anxiety" has had upon the performances given by many of the students I have taught.

Whilst I have witnessed these dramatic effects of "*music performance anxiety*" on the young students I have taught over the past few years, it is realised that not

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<sup>1</sup>Lucinda Mackworth-Young (1995) "*Coping with Exam Nerves Practical Guide*"  
Australian Music Teacher Volume Four, Number Four 1995 at page 248



only the young or novice performer will suffer from music performance anxiety. Many world renowned musicians suffer severely from anxiety attacks when practising or when rehearsing for performances.

In defining "*music performance anxiety*" some of the researchers in the area feel that a distinction needs to be drawn between "*anxiety*" and "*fear*". In other studies it is felt that a distinction needs also to be drawn between "*anxiety*" before a performance and "*arousal*" before or during a performance.

To begin then a definition of "*music performance anxiety*" is required. Some would argue that it is quite distinct from "*fear*" and "*arousal*".

**"Fear"** Is defined by Gray as "a state of mind or a state of feeling having certain causal antecedents in the environment and leading to certain causal consequences in behaviour."<sup>2</sup>

**"Anxiety"** Is defined as something less than this, more of a "helplessness" and "uncertainty"<sup>3</sup>, an exaggerated perception of a situation.

**"Arousal"** Is again something different. Some musicians feel that it is vital to a good performance that they obtain and maintain a high level of "arousal". This is the body's way of maintaining focus on the task at hand. It involves increased heart rate and adrenalin release into the blood stream.

Salmon defines "*music performance anxiety*" as -

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<sup>2</sup>Jeffrey Allan Gray(1987)*The Psychology of Fear and Stress*  
Gray J Cambridge University Press 2nd Edition at page 289

<sup>3</sup> R May (1950)*The Meaning of Anxiety* at page 11

"the experience of persisting distressful; apprehension about and/or actual impairment of performance skills in a public context to a degree unwarranted given the individuals musical aptitude, training and level of preparation."<sup>4</sup>

This research paper does not confine itself to this narrow definition of music performance anxiety. This paper looks into strategies that will assist those performers who are anxious about performing and who "*fear*" performing.

It is felt that to only review those articles that deal with music performance anxiety and not those that deal with a "fear" of performing would limit this project. It is felt that a true definition of music performance anxiety is wide enough to incorporate what some researchers consider to be more than anxiety when performing but a fear of performing.

Therefore the definition that is used as the basis of this research paper is my own, and is a synthesis of a number of definitions. It is as follows:-

<p><b><i>"Music Performance Anxiety"</i></b></p>	<p>"A condition where the performer's well being (mental and/or physical) and/ or his/her performance is negatively affected by anxiety and fear, so that to improve the performance and/or the health and well being of the performer some coping strategies need to be adopted."</p>
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<sup>4</sup> Salmon, Paul G & Meyer, Robert G, (1992)  
Notes from the Green Room - Coping with Stress and Anxiety in Musical Performance.  
 Lexington Books MacMillan, Inc. New York USA at page 35

This definition is intentionally wide so that it encapsulates the minor affects of performance anxiety such as, sweaty palms, and is still wide enough to cover the more major affects, such as, in extreme cases, heart attack and stroke.

## 1.2 Statement of the Issue

The aim of this research project, by reading and collating the current available literature is to -

- provide a definition of music performance;
- provide some theories as to the causes of music performance anxiety;
- attempt to outline ways in which music performance anxiety affects different performers;
- identify the various coping strategies; and
- evaluate the various coping strategies.

The area of nerves in performance or performance anxiety, affecting the performing musician is one which inevitably will have some effect on almost every person who is put into a performing situation, be it music or something else.

The musician and the strategies that have been considered in the literature that focuses on the musician are the focus of this research paper, with the acknowledgment that many of the strategies discussed are applicable to other performers.

Nerves in performance generally are present with all musicians for a number of reasons. Possibly because musicians are expected to perform in a number of

stressful situations, this combined with their fear of failure and the expectation that they should perform to the same or better standard with each performance.

However even though the situations in which musicians perform are often stressful, to perform to the best of their ability and to give brilliant performances, musicians must find ways of dealing with the debilitating effects of nervousness or performance anxiety.

For many years performers and teachers of music have been coming up with theories on how to cope with musical performance anxiety. As the topic has been studied the theories have become more detailed.

It is the intention of this study to look at the most current and relevant material of those available of these theories and strategies and to discuss and compare them to provide the musician or reader with a better understanding of what most musicians go through when performing, the available coping strategies and some idea of the effectiveness of each strategy.

Quite an amount of research has been carried out in the area of "nerves in performance." This information has not been collated in any detailed way and it is the aim of this research paper to do this by pooling the studies and research discussions together in a clear and succinct manner.

### 1.3 Significance of the issue

The issue of the current strategies available to deal with musical performance anxiety is very relevant to the modern musical performer and therefore an issue that deserves further consideration.

Most musical performers would acknowledge that to varying degrees their performance has been or is affected by the anxiety that they feel when performing. Those who can say that they are in no way affected by performance anxiety must either be unique or have already developed their own set of effective strategies of dealing with the problem.

Music performance anxiety can in some cases be so severe in young musicians early development that they give up a potential career in music. In other circumstances very promising musicians have cut short their careers as a result of the stress they perceive that they are under each time they perform. These cases, where the musicians have stopped performing as their method of "coping" (eradicating the cause) with their music performance anxiety should teach others that in its extreme form music performance anxiety can have a devastating affect on individual's lifestyles and career choices.

Past research conducted shows that virtually all performers experience nervousness, whether it is before, during or after a performance. Many of the studies completed in recent years have confirmed that not only does music performance anxiety have a detrimental affect on the musician's current performance and his confidence, it can also effect his/her mental and physical health and long term well being.

To musicians, the result of a heavy nerves attack can be crippling, and possibly very damaging to both their career and their health. If the musician is continually subjected to such stress there is a real risk of, as with other professions, which are exposed to high levels of stress of high blood pressure, heart attack, and stroke.

It must also be recognised that if the performer suffers music performance anxiety and is not educated as to the strategies that he can adopt that will alleviate the anxiety he may make an uneducated decision as to what will help reduce the affects of the anxiety. In the extreme case he may choose short term "coping strategies" such as alcohol or drugs that will in fact in the long term be detrimental to his musical career. The significance of the issue becomes apparent when it involves enlightening various strategies of current thought in dealing with performance nerves.

With the ability to look at the various coping strategies for dealing with nerves the performer should be able to identify the strategies that best suit him and his instrument and glean ideas to aid him or herself in future situations.

Knowledge of these various coping strategies could also be passed on to other performers and/or students to help lessen the impact of anxiousness so often associated with performance.

### 1.4 Research Questions

- Q.1 Is there a common understanding of the term "*music performance anxiety*"?
- Q.2 What are the effects upon the musical performer of music performance anxiety?
- Q.3 What are the current strategies in dealing with music performance anxiety?
- Q.4 Are there any common strategies employed by the surveyed writers?

### 1.5 Research Design

The research design for this study is the accumulation, survey, comparison and synthesis of a number of current and relevant articles and text dealing with the area to be studied.

### 1.6 Limitations of the study

This study may be limited by insufficient study duration to carry out a full synthesis of the available literature. The limitations in time prevented a complete comparison and evaluation of current strategies in coping with music performance anxiety.

Other limitations were the expense in obtaining current literature, which is generally presented in journals and serials.

The literature was obtained from the following sources:-

- The University of Tasmania Morris Miller Library;
- The Conservatorium of Music (Tasmania) Library;
- The Tasmanian State Library; and
- A resource check of the literature available on the *Internet*

Unfortunately some of the texts that should have been included in this Literature Review were unavailable within the resource centres accessed for this paper. This has become apparent through an internet check.

Limitations in the texts themselves are that the writers' "findings" are often based purely on their own experiences and speculations. Thus, material covered in this study may be perceived by some as being of debatable reliability and validity.

### 1.7 Chapter Outlines

The chapters in this paper are:-

#### **Chapter 2, Review of the Literature**

This chapter contains a summary of the most relevant and interesting articles and texts that cover music performance anxiety, stage fright, performance stress and the methods or coping strategies that have been suggested over the years, focusing in more detail on the newer articles.

#### **Chapter 3 Methodology**



This chapter is concise and sets out the subject, protocol and data analysis used within the research paper.

#### **Chapter 4 Discussion**

This Chapter outlines the findings by comparing the strategies outlined within the Literature Review as contained in Chapter 2. The results and strategies are interpreted and comment is made on which coping strategies are advocated most widely by the various writes and further which are deemed to be the most effective.

#### **Chapter 5 Conclusion**

This chapter contains the conclusions to the research paper and examines briefly the comments made at the end of the discussion chapter.

# CHAPTER 2

## Review of the Literature

When the topic for this research paper was first chosen I had no real expectations nor preconceived ideas about what type of literature would be available on what I thought would be quite a narrow and well defined area. What has become clear is that there is an abundance of literature and that the literature encompasses many different views on:-

- what is meant by "*music performance anxiety*", whether it should be defined broadly or narrowly;
- what are the most important short term and long term effects of it; and
- most importantly, what are the best "*coping strategies*" that the musician should employ to attempt to eliminate or reduce it.

What does become clear and where all writers tend to agree is that "*music performance anxiety*" "*stage-fright*" and "*fear of performing*" does significantly reduce the musicians playing abilities and in some cases effects the performers physical and mental well being.

What follows then is a summary of the most relevant of the articles examined for this research paper. Some of these articles are summarised in detail, whilst others are summarised very briefly.

This literature review does not summarise all articles and texts that have been perused and that are therefore mentioned in the bibliography. Many of the

articles do cover the same strategies and ideas and many perused are now fairly old.

This Literature Review is in date order, starting with summaries from the oldest books and articles and working towards the newest articles. It has been done in this way to show, or attempt to show how the various coping strategies have developed over the years.

**May, Rollo (1950) The Meaning of Anxiety The Ronald Press Company.**

An old text, that consolidated the studies to date dealing with anxiety. It was aimed at defining anxiety and the causes of anxiety.

It concludes with some strategies for coping with anxiety. The suggested strategies that are put forward are very narrow and this study is included in this synthesis to show how far the studies in the area have expanded. The basic underlying strategy is the avoidance of situations that cause anxiety.

Perhaps 45 years ago it was possible to avoid stressful situations, but nowadays, given the competitive nature of society such strategy for most is not a viable solution.

**Grindea, Carola (1978) Tensions in the Performance of Music- A Symposium Kahn & Averill, London**

This book is a collection of articles that deal with techniques of relieving physical tension and of achieving the muscular coordination essential to technical competence. The book focuses on techniques for a wide variety of performers; dancers, actors and music performers.

**Meichenbaum, Donald (1978) Cognitive-Behaviour Modification : An Integrative Approach New York: Plenum Press**

This book is Meichenbaum's account of a research project conducted by him. Meichenbaum confesses to being a "eclectic research-clinician"<sup>5</sup> who in this book provides details of the methods tried to improve negative cognitive behaviour. The book describes all methods tried, including those he describes as failures.

This book, through its 9 chapters details techniques such as:-

- imagery;
- the use of relaxation techniques;
- systematic desensitisation;
- mental rehearsal;
- stress inoculation training; and
- the use of working in a group to assist with developing coping strategies.

The book is in places very clinical and does not address specifically the musician and techniques to be used by him. It does however offer a look at the various more general techniques available. They are not summarised here as those that are considered relevant to the music performer are summarised in this literature review in the other articles such as; Ely, Lapple, Lupul and Mackworth-Young, which are summarised below.

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<sup>5</sup> Meichenbaum, Donald (1978) Cognitive-Behaviour Modification : An Integrative Approach New York: Plenum Press at page 15

**Havas, Kato(1978) Stage Fright, Its causes and cures, Bosworth & Co. Ltd. 14/18 Heddon Street Regent London W1R 8DP**

This is a book geared to assist the performing violinist although some of the information is useful to the most instrumentalists.

Havas defines stage fright as an exaggerated symptom of anxiety that can hit like a disease. It affects the whole body like a disease. The hands become either icy cold in the hottest climate or damp with sweat in an ice-cold room. Nausea or the inability to eat and the need to relieve oneself seem to be the most common and universal symptoms.

The causes seem to fall onto 3 categories:-

- physical;
- mental; and
- social.

### **The physical aspects of stage fright**

Generally the causes and suggested cures for the physical aspects are aimed directly at the violinist.

### **The mental aspects of stage fright**

Some of the mental aspects of stage fright are universal fears of the performer. For example the fear of memory lapse.

#### **Causes**

- rigidity through out the body;

- reliance on mechanical repetitive memorisation;
- lack of co-ordination;
- anxiety caused by technical passages; and
- anxiety caused by the inflated self.

### Cures

- the release from physical blockages;
- the division of each piece into sections;
- the identification of the notes within each section through singing and miming with the rhythmic pulse before playing it; and
- the elimination of the "self" through a systematic training of the mind.

Havas suggests that the power of the imagination is maybe one of the greatest assets in the elimination of stage fright. If a player learns to activate his imagination with positive ideas his self doubts tend to disappear.

### The Social Aspects of stage fright

Chief amongst these Havas identifies the fear of "*not being good enough*".

### Causes

- the competitive attitude in our social system;
- the strive to succeed attitude in a competitive world; and
- the evaluation of ones personal worth according to the degree of success accorded by society.

### Cures

- to look at playing as a form of creative act instead of a technical accomplishment; and

- to exchange the concept of good and bad in playing for a standard of physical comfort and also to assess the degree of one's success by the ability to transmit the music to the listener.



**Spielberger, Charles (1979) Understanding Stress and Anxiety  
Multimedia Publications Inc.**

This text starts with a discussion on "*stress*" and makes the comment that *Stress is an integral part of life*.

The negative aspects are diverse:-

- poor performance in an exam;
- insomnia;
- headaches;
- skin rashes; and
- serious medical disorders.

Different situations create different types of stress. The problems in our lives are all very different. Medical research has shown that in many respects the body responds in a stereotyped manner, with identical biochemical changes essentially meant to cope with any demand upon the human machinery<sup>6</sup>

Anxiety - encompasses tension, nervousness, fear and worry.

Strategy - The triumph of Logic "*Know when you feel anxious*"

"*Anxiety states*" vary in intensity. Apprehension, tension and nervousness are experienced at low to moderate levels of state anxiety. High levels of state anxiety are characterised by overwhelming fear, sometimes even by panic behaviour.

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Spielberger(1979) *Understanding Stress and Anxiety*  
Multimedia Publications Inc at page 6

Moderate to high levels of state anxiety may also be reflected in restlessness, trembling, shortness of breath, sweaty palms and muscular tics and twitches. With increasing stage anxiety there is also increased heart rate, a rise in blood pressure, rapid breathing and muscular tension. Stress is created by a stressor. The fear of failure is an important source of psychological stress.

**Green, Barry (1987) The Inner Game of Music Pan Books Ltd, Cavaye Place, London.**

A recent text, *The Inner Game of Music* is written essentially about, what the author calls "the Inner Game principles of natural learning". By this he means the games or images and techniques that the performer uses in his mind to overcome the "opponents" of nervousness, self-doubt and the fear of failure.

The Inner Game ideas had previously been developed in the context of the sportsman by Timothy Gallwey and Green in this 240 page text develops the principles further so that they can be applied to the performer of music.

Green details how people 'play' sport and 'play' music, even though both require hard work and discipline.

Essentially Green notes that the way a performer plays a piece of music is dependant on a number of things. Clearly he needs the musical abilities to play the piece, but he needs more than this, he needs the mental preparation and the ability to focus on the job at hand and to avoid external interference. That is he needs inner mental skills as well as musical talent.

How the performer plays the piece on any night, assuming that he has the ability to play the piece, depends on " the extent to which we interfere with our abilities as it does on those abilities themselves."<sup>7</sup>

Here Green sets out a simple equation

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<sup>7</sup> Green, Barry (1987) The Inner Game of Music  
Pan Books Ltd, Cavaye Place, London at page 23

$$P = p - i$$

where:

P = Performance, defined as the result achieved

p = Potential, defined as the performers innate ability

i = interference, the performer's ability to get in his own way

The book then sets out exercises and skills that can be acquired to reduce "i" thereby increasing "P".

The most important discovery of the Inner Game is how, particularly in our culture of achievement-oriented activities, human beings significantly get in their own way. The main object of this book is to provide an insight into ways of reducing mental interferences that inhibit the full expression of human potential.

This book covers a different 'look' at dealing with performance pressures placed on musicians and provides some interesting angles to view the whole area of Performance Anxiety in music.

**Gray, Jeffrey Alan (1987) The Psychology of Fear and Stress Cambridge University Press 2nd Edition**

This is a scientific text and has been included in this synthesis as it is recognised that when a person is nervous, for whatever reason his body exhibits that nervousness. His hands sweat, he needs to relieve himself, his throat becomes dry etc.

This text discusses these consequences in detail and compares the human reaction to fear and stress to the reactions of other animals.

Fear is defined as "*A state of mind or a state of feeling having certain causal antecedents in the environment and leading to certain causal consequences in behaviour.*"

This text recognises that some types of fear are innate but that some others are learnt.

Some of the theorists have stated that in extreme cases of performance nerves the physical reactions can be extreme. These performers can exhibit signs that other non-performers may only exhibit if placed into situations where they fear for their own safety. What are these two different people fearing? The person who, for example realises that a snake has just crawled into the room fears injury to his person. The performer on the other hand fears giving a bad performance, failing his exam or is receiving the scorn of the audience. Why may these two people in completely different circumstances exhibit the same physical reactions?

Does it demonstrate that the performer has learnt to fear the performance, or rather the consequences of giving a bad performance. He feels pressured to succeed by the fear of failing. In reality the performer does not fear the actual performance but the consequences of performing badly. A strategy then to reduce the performers nerves would be to lessen the consequences that follow on from a bad performance.

**Lupul, Ruth (1988) "Overcoming Audition Jitters" Woodwind Anthology  
Volume One (page 881 - 883)**

The key to overcoming audition jitters is to **be prepared**.

The elements that she suggests include:

- taping yourself perform, playing it back so that you can hear that you do in fact know your piece and can play it well;
- choose comfortable clothing to perform in;
- in the context of playing for an audition, staying away from other performers auditioning;
- learn all the pieces that you may need to play not just the ones that are the likely ones to come up;
- warm up sensibly by getting rest before the performance;
- attempt, before the performance to simulate it, walk into a large hall or the hall that you will be performing in as often prior to the performance as you can;
- have your family and friends watch you practice; and
- realise that this performance will only be one of many, if you do not perform as well as you had wished in that performance there will be other ones;

**Lapple, Judy (1988) "Overcoming Performance Anxiety" Woodwind Anthology Volume One (pages 470-71)**

Lapple, through research into performance anxiety discovered years ago that a performer can lose up to 30% of their performing ability through nervousness. She believes that the key to beating these nerves is to get beyond "fears, self-doubts and physical and mental obstacles. It requires a positive mental attitude, a strong self-image and hard work"<sup>8</sup>

Lapple believes that many performers make mistakes when performing because they are focusing on what the audience may think of them and are therefore not focusing on the performance. They may also focus on difficult parts of the performance that are coming up, pre-empting sweaty palms and thereby they make that part even harder to play when it does come along.

To overcome the nervousness she states the performer must firstly recognise how they develop. Recognising the fear of making the mistake is the first step. The next step is "to replace negative thoughts with positive ones."<sup>9</sup>

She suggests that this is done by -

- taping a performance of the tricky movement in the piece being played and playing it back to the performer. The performer will realise that they can in fact play the complicated piece;

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<sup>8</sup>Lapple, Judy (1988) "Overcoming Performance Anxiety"  
Woodwind Anthology Volume One at page 470

<sup>9</sup> Lapple, Judy (1988) "Overcoming Performance Anxiety"  
Woodwind Anthology Volume One at page 470



- visualising playing the piece correctly again and again, if this is done enough it should assist in obtaining the correct fingering etc.

Lapple believes that the performer once practised enough should be able to use the anxiety positively. Perhaps a bit simply she states "Anxiety is part of a performer's life, but it is an aspect that can be controlled and used to a performer's advantage. After all, isn't anxiety simply excess energy."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Lapple, Judy (1988) *"Overcoming Performance Anxiety"*  
Woodwind Anthology Volume One at page 471

**Ely, Mark C. (1991) "Stop Performance Anxiety!" *Music Educators Journal*. Volume 79, Number 2 (pp 35-39)**

This article addresses ways that the teacher of music can assist their students to *"handle the butterflies and other emotional aspects of performing"*<sup>11</sup>

Ely believes that musicians face stress or stage fright as he terms it because they often must perform in a variety of stressful situations. He too is of the opinion that a little tension before an event can actually enhance performance, "but when this nervousness becomes debilitating, it is necessary to find ways to overcome its effects."<sup>12</sup>

- **a physiological component**, which is increased heart rate, sweating, shortness of breath, shaking, and other changes within the body;
- **a cognitive component**, which our thoughts and worries about a given situation;
- **a behavioural component**, changing the way we think or behave to avoid anxiety causing situations; and
- **a psychological component**, how our perceptions of a given situation affect our responses to it.

Ely states that these components may be experienced separately, but it is more common that they are experienced together in varying degrees. The fact that they are interrelated makes finding solutions to the problem difficult. To reduce performance anxiety we must learn to overcome their effects.

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<sup>11</sup> Ely, Mark C. (1991) "Stop Performance Anxiety!" *Music Educators Journal*. Volume 79, Number 2 at page 35

<sup>12</sup> Ely, Mark C. (1991) "Stop Performance Anxiety!" *Music Educators Journal*. Volume 79, Number 2 at page 35

Ely then lists in some detail the different physical reactions the human body can have when a person experiences stage fright. As there are numerous physical reactions a body can have, if many of them are experienced it is virtually impossible to perform well unless these reactions are abolished or at least reduced.

Next Ely turns to the psychological aspect of performance anxiety. He describes the fear of performing as a social phobia, as performers learn to fear performing as they learn to fear failing or being ridiculed. Such thoughts can overwhelm the performer and then naturally the performance will suffer as a consequence.

### **Ways of reducing performance anxiety**

#### **1) Beta-blocking drugs**

There are a number of these drugs available but Ely points out a number of reasons why it is advisable that drugs should not be used to overcome performance anxiety:

- drugs mask the symptoms of performance anxiety, but they do not cure the problem;
- there is a real risk of side effects;
- their effectiveness can be short lived and often insignificant;
- and
- it may lead to a dependence.

#### **2) Relaxation techniques - Ely then provides a discussion of the various relaxation techniques that are available:-**

- *psychotherapy* - the verbal exchanges of thoughts and concerns by the patient and a therapist in an attempt "to reveal the

patient's internal, mental, and emotional experiences .....These exchanges provide the patient with new insights into existing areas of conflict and anxiety."<sup>13</sup>

- *imagery* - where the patient is instructed to imagine scenes that evoke positive responses such as accomplishment and adequacy.
- *cognitive statements* - where the performer is taught to replace negative statements with positive statements (for example instead of before a performance saying "*I know I am going to play badly*" but instead saying "*I know I will play well*").
- *autogenic therapy* - where the performer is taught to recite a number of phrases over and over while relaxing. Whilst doing this the performer is focusing on his body and making it relax. Once the performer is relaxed he is taught phrases that deal with how relaxed and under control his body is, with such phrases as "my mind is quiet". Then, once the performer has finished the therapy, he can before a performance call on these phrases to assist him to get his body relaxed and his mind ready and focused for the performance.

These relaxation techniques can be used by the musician as an integral part of his/her preparation for a performance. Ely notes that the performer has "learnt" to be stressed by the performance, so to eliminate or reduce this stress he must change his perception "**that this performance will be stressful**". To do so the music performer must approach the performance calmly and initially reduce all

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<sup>13</sup> Ely, Mark C. (1991) "*Stop Performance Anxiety!*"  
Music Educators Journal. Volume 79, Number 2 at page 37

the non-musical matters associated with the performance that may lead to stress.

Ely identifies some of these as:-

- making sure that the performer has himself at the performance with all the required equipment well before the performance is scheduled;
- making sure the performer is wearing comfortable clothes;
- making sure that friends and family know where the performance is being held; and
- making sure that his instrument is in good order.

### 3) Practicing the music before the performance:-

- The musician should always try and perform the piece with their accompanist before the performance and if possible in the setting of the performance.
- Also the performer who is nervous about performing should try and perform as often as possible. With each performance their confidence in their own abilities should improve. The performer will come to learn what to expect when performing and will be able to try out the various coping strategies and work out which of them best suit them.

### 4) Being prepared for the performance

The performer should, if they have long enough before the performance, try to practice the piece as often as possible. Also if possible, the performer should practise over a time period rather than cramming all his/her rehearsals into a short period. The performer should study the music and learn up the style of the piece that he/she is going to perform.

The performer should leave nothing to chance. If he/she needs to they should write notes on the sheet music. He/she should remain as focused as possible during the performance, concentrating not on the non-musical matters as set out above but on the musical matters such as tempo, style, dynamics etc.

**Salmon, Paul G & Meyer, Robert G, (1992) Notes from the Green Room - Coping with Stress and Anxiety in Musical Performance. Lexington Books MacMillan, Inc. New York USA**

This book was written by these two authors as they perceived their a need to update and consolidate the data and approaches available to performers to assist them cope with "chronic stress, intense competition, and prolonged training and preparation."<sup>14</sup>

Having access to educational, medical and psychological resources can aid the performer cope with stress and therefore enhance his performance. These authors also note as do other writers in the areas, that adopting coping strategies can help to reduce the risk of developing disabling physical or psychological problems.

Many of the other writers in the area, it is thought by these authors, oversimplified the cure to overcoming stage-fright and performance anxiousness. Salmon & Meyer feel that adopting a positive attitude is part of the method but not a strategy that will work alone.

This text is very detailed and it would not be appropriate here to provide a lengthy summary. As a starting point the authors adopt "Meichenbaum's stress inoculation training" this book has been reviewed briefly above. The theory at its root, is a procedure where the performer learns to identify what causes them stress and from there they develop effective coping skills and put these skills into practice.

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<sup>14</sup> Salmon, Paul G & Meyer, Robert G, (1992)  
Notes from the Green Room - Coping with Stress and Anxiety in Musical Performance.  
 Lexington Books MacMillan, Inc. New York USA at page preface viii

Many coping skills are explored, amongst these:-

- video taping the performer so that they can ascertain for themselves how they have performed, as objectively as possible, thereby reducing the artists ability to be too self critical;
- involving the performer in as many practice performances as possible;
- relaxation techniques;
  - deep breathing
  - closing your eyes
  - allow tension to leave your body
- imagery - building up positive images of yourself performing the piece well, including images that emphasis capabilities and skills;
- cognitive restructuring - replacing negative thoughts with positive ones;
- be thoroughly prepared;
- play well within your technical capabilities;
- keep in mind that most performers must cope with anxiety
- maintain your normal routine when preparing for a performance;
- consider the question what am I really afraid of? what is the worse case scenario?;
- try to overlook minor errors when you perform;
- treat performing as an opportunity rather than a death sentence;
- act calmly, even if you are feeling nervous;
- do not be surprised if you do feel tense before a performance, remember such feelings are normal;
- try to put the performance into perspective; and
- ensure that when you practice you practise using the appropriate muscles, do not practice with a tense body;



Stress, is caused by both external factors, difficult music, difficult conductors etc and internal factors, eg. lack of self confidence. It is, though, how the performers reacts to these and the other events surrounding the performance that can be controlled. The external factors can not be controlled to a great extent but the performer can, by adopting coping strategies, change how he reacts, change how these factors and influences effect his performance.

**Froelich, John (1994) Helping Students Deal with Stage Fright *Teaching Music* Volume One 1994, Menc. Publishers USA**

This is a brief article in the journal "Teaching Music" which is an American publication. It is aimed at giving the teacher of music to relatively young performers some hints on how to assist their students overcome stage-fright.

The suggestions are:-

- ensure that the student is well prepared prior to the performance, this writer notes that if a student knows his music and it is within his ability range they will usually have an inner sense of confidence.
- ensure that the student is "used" to playing in front of an audience, by practicing before family members and class mates etc.
- have the student partake in warm up relaxation exercises
- giving the student something prior to the performance to concentrate so that the student focuses away from his stage fright;
- ensuring that the student be given the piece of music at the right time before the performance. (Here he quotes from another teacher, Steven Michelson) the idea being that for each student a piece of music has a finite life-span, starting when the student is handed the piece and ending after the performance. The teacher needs to ensure that the student is given the piece early enough to learn it but late enough to ensure it is played with enthusiasm and freshness. He feels that the students should be playing the piece at the concert or performance when they still have to concentrate on the piece, this will ensure a good performance and the child will continue to feel good about performing;

- reminding the student that some anxiety or nervousness is inevitable and can be a good thing. Let the student know that adrenalin is a by- product of performing and can be a good thing, it allows the student to stay alert and focused on the performance;
- advising the students that should they make a mistake during a performance they should not accentuate it, by rolling eyes or heaving shoulders. The student should continue with the performance and learn to accept the mistakes and let them fall away ((Here he quotes from another teacher, Professor Kenneth Phillips)

**Mackworth-Young, Lucinda (1995) Coping with Exam Nerves a Practical Guide *The Australian Music Teacher* Volume Four, Number Four 1995. Alfred Publishing (Australia) Limited**

This is a very clear and concisely written article outlining the writer's own experiences and theories on how to cope with exam nerves.

She attempts to develop ways to deal with the feeling, just before a performance that "you" will not live up to the expectations placed upon you. Her coping strategies are:-

1. Perform your piece in the "here and now" do not attempt to reconstruct past performances

Remember that you are performing here and now, not trying to reconstruct how you performed the last time you practised. Focus on this and not on how you practised, do not concentrate on other things, for example that you wish you were somewhere else or that the performance was over.

2. Concentrate on enjoying the task at hand.

Aim to enjoy your performance. By doing so you can aim at making the performance look and sound good. Others will see that you are enjoying performing and this will in turn affirm your own enjoyment, when you realise others are deriving pleasure from the way you are performing. This positive concentration will help to combat the paralysing effects of nerves.

### 3. Be fully prepared

To enjoy a performance you need to be fully prepared. If the performance is for an exam begin preparations as soon as possible. If possible chose to play a piece of music that you really enjoy. Enjoy practice by taking it slowly. If you have given yourself ample time to prepare you will have time to break down the piece and study it carefully. The piece should be broken down in a way that is appropriate to the instrument that you are playing. Study it "with your eyes, ears intellect and fingers so that it sinks in at a deep level and you feel comfortable and in control rather than blindly hoping for the best."<sup>15</sup>

Mackworth-Young also notes that preparation should include mental preparation. You need to believe that you will succeed. Such confidence will be achieved if you have performed well during practice. Such practice should be before some audience, be they fellow students, your teacher or your family. Positive communication from these people will become internalised by you and help you develop the positive attitude that is required.

### 4. Imagine yourself in the role of examiner

Imagine what you would look for in a performer if you were an examiner. Realise that what the examiner would not want to see if a performer was upset by any little error.

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<sup>15</sup> Lucinda Mackworth-Young (1995) *"Coping with Exam Nerves Practical Guide"*  
Australian Music Teacher Volume Four, Number Four 1995 at page 248

## 5. Physical preparation

Make sure well ahead of time that you have what you need for the performance. Extend this plan out the whole day leading up to the performance.

Make sure you know where the following items are:-

- instrument;
- music;
- music stand;
- hankie;
- performance clothes;
- comb.

Make sure you have planned for:-

- the trip to the performance;
- refreshments before and after the performance.

To be rushing around at the last moment looking for some essential item will clearly add to an already stressful situation.

## 6. Emotional Preparation

The day before the performance start focusing in a positive way. Remind yourself that you have done all the practice you could, now you must concentrate on the performance.

Mackworth-Young sets out four exercises that she feels will be useful:-

- Breathing in and holding your breath and feeling the tingling sensation etc.
- Stretching and flexing muscles to keep the blood flowing through. She notes that by this stage the hands should be at the correct temperature. If not they could be immersed in warming or cooling water.
- Visualising yourself playing the opening of your piece.
- Using keywords to help focus your mind and steady concentration.

**Zeiger, Albert (1996) 10 Step to a Happier Classroom *Teaching Music* Volume Four 1996, Menc. Publishers USA**

This is a brief article aimed at providing "hints" to the teacher of music to help them stay calm when teaching classroom music. It is noted that this is not an article that addresses the precise topic of this paper, but has been included for two reasons:-

- The first is that some of the suggestions made can be used by the performer of music to stay calm.
- The second and major reason for it's inclusion here is so that the topic of "music teaching anxiety" can be explored further in Chapter 4, in the area suggested ways of expanding the research area.

The ten steps are as follows:-

- stay calm and in control no matter what;
- ignore the behaviour of disruptive students;
- mediate;
- maintain a positive atmosphere;
- enforce the rules;
- take necessary disciplinary action;
- stress the importance of music;
- be prepared;
- change your plan when necessary; and
- have an orientation period.



**Solomon, Alan Why are You So Nervous, The Anatomy of Stage-Fright, Wits, South Africa, Taliesin Editions.**

Unfortunately this book was unavailable, but was discovered to be in existence when a final check of all the relevant journals was conducted just prior to the final printing of this paper. This text is reviewed in "*The British Journal of Music Education Volume 13 Number 2, July 1996*" The reviewer of this text remarks that it is an excellent book, containing many uncommon common sense solutions to performance nervousness. The writer starts with the basic premise that "no matter what psychological causes there are, nervousness is essential a physiological condition"

His solutions are:-

- good posture;
- the development of good muscles to enable the performer to achieve more with less effort;
- general health and fitness;
- the need for physical energy;
- dynamic relaxation - the ability to sustains tension in the appropriate muscles whilst remaining relatively relaxed in the inappropriate ones;
- proper technical preparation - this is getting the piece right first and then practicing it;
- becoming familiar with the formal environment of the public performance;
- maintaining the performers self confidence - teachers and instructors need to ensure that they are positive and constructive with criticism. Solomon feels that many teachers are very "nasty" in their criticism, "with attitudes like these, ordinary stage-fright becomes stage-panic, because we've been conditioned to equate quality of performance with personal worth"<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Solomon, Alan (1996) Why are You So Nervous Text (As reviewed in)

# CHAPTER 3

## Methodology

### 3.1 Subjects

For this project the subjects required for the research consisted of published literature on or about the studied topic. Material surveyed was chosen on notably relevance in the subject area and also on age. That is the aim of this research paper was to obtain "current" thoughts on anxiety in musical performance, and ways of coping with it.

By having the research subjects in the form of published literature the survey and synthesis of them provides for research that has a high level of reliability and validity as there is less room for misinterpretation on behalf of the subjects themselves or the researcher. This is further supported by the picking of literature that has been written by authors who have a considerable knowledge in this area.

### 3.2 Protocol

Having decided upon the research topic area, literature was gathered from the following resource facilities:-

- The University of Tasmania Morris Miller Library;

- The Conservatorium of Music (Tasmania) Library;
- The Tasmanian State Library; and
- A resource check of the literature available on the *Internet*

Given that there is a large amount of literature directly and indirectly on the topic this information gathering part of the project was time consuming and, took place over a considerable time period.

All articles found were read. The research questions were focused upon and from this starting point only the articles and books considered to be relevant to the research questions were reviewed for the research paper.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Having obtained a collection of desirable and relevant material, a process was undertaken whereby the articles and books were analysed (synthesised) and summarised and compiled by the writer into a clear and concise way, with utmost relevance to the chosen area of research.

The more recently published books and articles were given the most weight and were summarised in more detail for the literature review chapter (Chapter 2) and for collating in the discussion contained in Chapter 4. This was done because many of the older books proffered strategies that have been rejected by the later articles or which are covered in more detail by them. It has only been relatively recently that awareness of how important the subject is has come to light and therefore that the many strategies have been put forward.

# CHAPTER 4

## Discussion

### 4.1 Introduction - What Causes Music Performance Anxiety?

As can be seen from the Literature Review contained in Chapter 2 there are many theories on what causes a performer to become anxious about performing and to therefore suffer from some form of music performance anxiety. Many of the studies do share the theory that the fear of performing music in public, be it for an exam or concert is a "*social phobia*", that is a fear that is not innate but learnt. In particular Ely at page 37, Gray at page 289 and Havas at page 114 share this belief.

There should be nothing innately fearful of picking up an instrument and playing it. What is feared is failing in the playing of this instrument, fear of being ridiculed or simply of not living up to what is expected. The less confident the performer, the worse that performer's "self image". That performer is more likely to fall victim to the many symptoms or consequences of music performance anxiety.

The performer is fearful of not performing well, of being judged badly by either his peers, his audience or his teachers. The performer runs the real risk that by giving a bad performance he will damage his self-esteem, thus damaging himself as a human being.

Ely and Havas attribute anxiety to conditioning; the young performer is taught to fear performing. His natural early eagerness to pick up an instrument and play is replaced, as he becomes older, with a fear that those watching and listening will laugh at him if he does not perform well. Is music performance anxiety traceable back in all cases to early childhood experiences?

Another common theory that runs throughout the articles and texts read is in part at least that music performance anxiety is caused by how the performer perceives the situation. Both Ely at page 37 and Mackworth-Young at page 249 note that if adequately prepared, there would seem to be no rational reason why a performer should not be able to perform his/her task on a particular occasion according to his/her ability. Thus, the anxiety which is felt by the performers is due to exaggerated and irrational perceptions of the situation. To reduce these irrational perceptions of the situation the performer needs to prepare his physical self, his mental self and prepare for his performance.

As Gray notes at page 289 performers can learn to fear a performance, not the performance as such, but how they perceive the situation surrounding the performance; the perceived consequences that will flow from a bad performance. The reaction in the performer in the extreme case can be acute, even akin to the reaction another human may have when faced with a physical threat such as a snake. Humans have then developed in such a way that we can react in the same physical and mental ways when under "attack" by a hostile audience and when under attack by a hostile snake. The first is a fear or "anxiety" caused by a subjective danger and the second is a fear caused of an objective danger. Both, in extreme cases can cause the same response, that is trigger the fight-or-flight response.

What is interesting is Solomon's belief "that no matter what psychological causes there are, nervousness is essentially a physiological condition." The other writers, Solomon & Meyer, Gray, Havas & Ely have found that what causes music performance anxiety is our innate taught fear of failure. Solomon on the other hand believes that nervousness is a physiological condition. He develops in his text a strength quotient and feels that a performer will give a good performance if he can channel powerful physical, mental and emotional energies into the performance.

What does become clear from reviewing all the texts is that each performer is unique, each has had different influences when growing up and each is subjected to different external and internal factors when waiting to perform and whilst performing. A factor that may cause great stress to one performer may not even affect another. No further discussion on this aspect is therefore proposed.

#### 4.2 Symptoms of Music Performance Anxiety

The "components" of Music performance anxiety are best explained, as has been done by Ely at page 37 in the following categories:-

- **a physiological component**, which is increased heart rate, sweating, shortness of breath, shaking, and other changes within the body;
- **a cognitive component**, which our thoughts and worries about a given situation;
- **a behavioural component**, changing the way we think or behave to avoid anxiety causing situations; and
- **a psychological component**, how our perceptions of a given situation affect our responses to it.

Some of the writers believe that the cognitive components are fundamental to the problem as they cause the other components. The cognitive aspect of Music performance anxiety then, is the performer's conscious or subconscious, negative or uncertain feeling or perception of the performance situation.

Upper most in many performers mind is the fear of "*not being good enough*" (Havas page 114) The causes are in part the competitive attitude in our social system and the striving to succeed in a competitive world and the evaluation of one's personal worth according to the degree of success accorded by society.

It is not a good environment to be performing where the performer fears that she will not be accepted if she makes a mistake. These thoughts quite often are irrational and exaggerated and often tend to become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Typical of Music performance anxiety is also self-consciousness and "audience-consciousness"

There are many different behavioural symptoms of music performance anxiety, caused by, in many cases, the release of the two hormones adrenalin and noradrenaline into the bloodstream. As a result of this the performer experiences physiological symptoms such as; an increase in blood pressure, heart rate, rate of breathing and blood flow to the muscles and metabolism, dry mouth, constricted throat and urinary urgency are also often observed

Many of these behavioural aspects can be noticed by the audience, for example; trembling, sweating, nausea, dizziness, hyperventilation, grimacing after making a mistake, increased mechanical aspects of playing, such as hand movements.

These can be classified as the cognitive and physiological symptoms of Music performance anxiety.

#### 4.3 Strategies for coping with" Music Performance Anxiety

All musicians are different, some, the lucky ones do not feel anything but arousal or very slight nervousness when they are waiting to perform or performing. Others in the same situation, with the same musical abilities and with as much or more practice behind them will be showing physical signs of strain and nervousness and anxiety. These may include, sweaty palms, the need to go to the bathroom frequently, a dry throat and trembling voice and body.

Therefore it would be naive to state "cures" that will eradicate music performance anxiety in all performers. The various papers, articles and texts that have been perused for this paper set out many different "coping strategies". These can only be put forward for each performer, for them to decide which are suitable for them. The individual performer may try a number of the strategies before he finds one, or a combination of many that help him reduce, or cope with his own anxiety.

As outlined throughout the literature review many coping strategies have been suggested over the last 20-25 years.

The major ones as ascertained from the literature review are as follows:-

#### 1. Relaxation techniques -

*psychotherapy*

*imagery*

*cognitive statements*

*autogenic therapy;*



2. Concentrate on enjoying the task at hand;
3. Physical preparation;
4. Emotional Preparation;
5. Maintaining a general health and fitness;
6. Imagine yourself in the role of examiner;
7. Perform your piece in the "here and now" do not attempt to reconstruct past performances;
8. Becoming familiar with the formal environment of the public performance;
9. Maintaining the performers self confidence;
10. Maintaining good posture whilst practicing and performing;
11. The development of good muscles;
12. Ensuring that the you are given the piece of music at the right time before the performance;
13. Remembering that some anxiety or nervousness is inevitable and can be a good thing;
14. Remembering that should you make a mistake during a performance you should not accentuate it, learn to accept the mistakes and let them fall away; and
15. Beta-blocking drugs

Most, if not all the writers advocate that one of the "best" coping strategies is being prepared, physically, mentally and emotionally. To attempt to perform in public a piece that you have only practiced once is destined to cause severe nervousness. The performer, who finds himself in this situation, unless exceptionally gifted is nervous because he is anticipating the audience's reaction. If the performance is one that means a lot to his career, an audition perhaps, it will have a very damaging affect upon his ego and self-confidence.

Many of the writers also stress the importance of employing sensible relaxation techniques. These should focus around both the mental and physical aspects of the performance. Exercise the mind by adopting a positive approach, and exercise the body by taking the necessary steps to ensure that the body is capable of giving it's best performance. The performer should ensure that he eats well, sleeps enough and limbers up prior to the performance.

#### 4.4 Recommendations for further research

##### 4.4.1 Recommendation 1

It would have been interesting within this research paper to have conducted a survey of a number of musicians prior to a performance, assuming that they had all rehearsed for approximately the same period and were more or less of the same musical ability and talent.

A survey, perhaps of an orchestra just prior to performing at a concert may be the best way of ensuring as far as possible that all musicians are to a similar standard concentrating on playing the same standard of music. Questions to these musicians would need to be both objective and subjective.

A draft questionnaire follows.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

**(DRAFT)**

Thankyou for agreeing to participate in this research project by answering, to the best of you abilities the questions that are set out below. I confirm that the information that is ascertained from this survey project will be used in confidence, if you do not wish to complete the details as to your name on the questionnaire please do not do. If you do complete your name the information in the questionnaire will not be disclosed to any of your fellow performers or any one associated with the Orchestra

**This questionnaire is aimed at:-**

- **looking at a group of highly skilled professionals and ascertaining if the individuals within the group display different symptoms of nervousness prior to performing.**
- **ascertaining in specific terms how the individual music performer is affected by "music performance anxiety" prior to performing**

Prior to answering the questions set out below please read through the definition of music performance anxiety

<b><i>"Music</i></b>	"A condition where the performer's well being
<b><i>Performance</i></b>	(mental and/or physical) and/ or his/her performance
<b><i>Anxiety"</i></b>	is negatively affected by anxiety and fear, so that to improve the performance and/or the health and well being of the performer some coping strategies need to be adopted."

## QUESTIONS

- 1) Please indicate the section of the Orchestra that you play in by ticking the relevant box below:

☐ Woodwind

☐ Brass

☐ Percussion

☐ Strings

- 2) Please indicate the position within your section by ticking the relevant box below:

☐ Leader

☐ First

☐ Second

☐ Other

(if other please indicate )

(.....)

- 3) Please indicate how many years you have been playing your instrument in an orchestra by placing a tick in the box next best represents this:

☐ Between 1 & 4 years

☐ Between 5 & 8 years

☐ Between 9 & 12 years

☐ Between 13 & 16 years

☐ Over 17 years ( please indicate how many years .....)

- 4) Please indicate how many hours you practiced for this concert over the last week.

.....

.....

5) Please indicate how many hours you normally practice before a concert:

.....

.....

.....

.....

6) Do you feel that you are now suffering from pre-performance anxiousness?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes please indicate on a scale of 1 to 10 how nervous you are feeling

0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

not nervous

nervous

very nervous

If no, did you in the past ever suffer from music performance anxiety before or during a performance?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes please indicate how you learnt to cope with this nervousness:

.....

.....

.....

6) Please list the ways in which you cope with any anxiety you may feel prior to a performance

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Thank you for answering these questions. If there are other matters that you feel are relevant please make these comments below**

.....

.....

.....

#### 4.4.2 Recommendation 2

As a student completing my final year of studies to become a music teacher I feel that it may be both interesting and informative for me if this study was expanded to encompass techniques or coping strategies for the teacher of music to eradicate nervousness in teaching music, this I call "music teaching anxiety." The article by Albert Zeiger as summarised in the Literature Review in Chapter 2 sets out 10 steps to a happier classroom. These have been listed in the literature review. Many of the techniques as set out in the literature reviewed for this paper can be employed by the music teacher, both to help him to enhance his student's musical performance and to enhance his teaching techniques.

# CHAPTER 5

## Conclusion

It is clear that both performers of music and teachers of music now acknowledge that there is a need to develop and teach with strategies to cope with music performance anxiety. In this paper I have attempted to provide an up to date synthesis of all the texts and articles that deal with any aspect of stage-fright, performance nervousness and music performance anxiety.

Given that there is more literature than originally anticipated Chapter 2 - The Literature Review is larger than had been expected, there was then a need to reduce the discussion as set out in Chapter 4. Given that the original aim of the paper was a collation of papers available it was felt that emphasis should (and therefore has been) be given to the Literature Review.

It is hoped that this paper will prove helpful to other performers and teachers of music. Many of the strategies as discussed throughout this paper are relatively simple to adopt, some clearly are common sense, and many performers will already be using them to enhance their performances. Reading an article or text that reinforces that they are on the right track or that the method that they have adopted in their own performances should encourage and reinforce effective coping strategies. Performers, if nothing more from perusing articles on coping with music performance anxiety, will discover that they are not alone in feeling stress, anxiousness and even fear when performing.



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